

**God's blessings to you all today!**

Holy Cross Lutheran is blessed to have you as part of our ministry.

Can you please take a look at this outline of what's going on today and in the next few weeks so you can get a 'sense' of how things are going, and what happens next?

First, The governor has issued guidelines for reopening – and made it dependent upon the Counties to allow businesses/churches to reopen based on several criteria. Your leadership is in touch with this information and we will keep you posted.

Second, our Worship team has a plan for a **VIRTUAL Ascension Service on Zoom on Thursday, May 21, at 7 pm!** We will sing Holden Evening Prayer together. We have a singer, and two musicians, and we are hoping you will join and sing, too.

Third!, Drive UP Communion on May 10 was great!! WE have another opportunity for **Drive Up Communion on May 31 at 2 pm!** This will celebrate **Pentecost and our 3 Confirmands making their Affirmation of Baptism!** Stay tuned for more info!

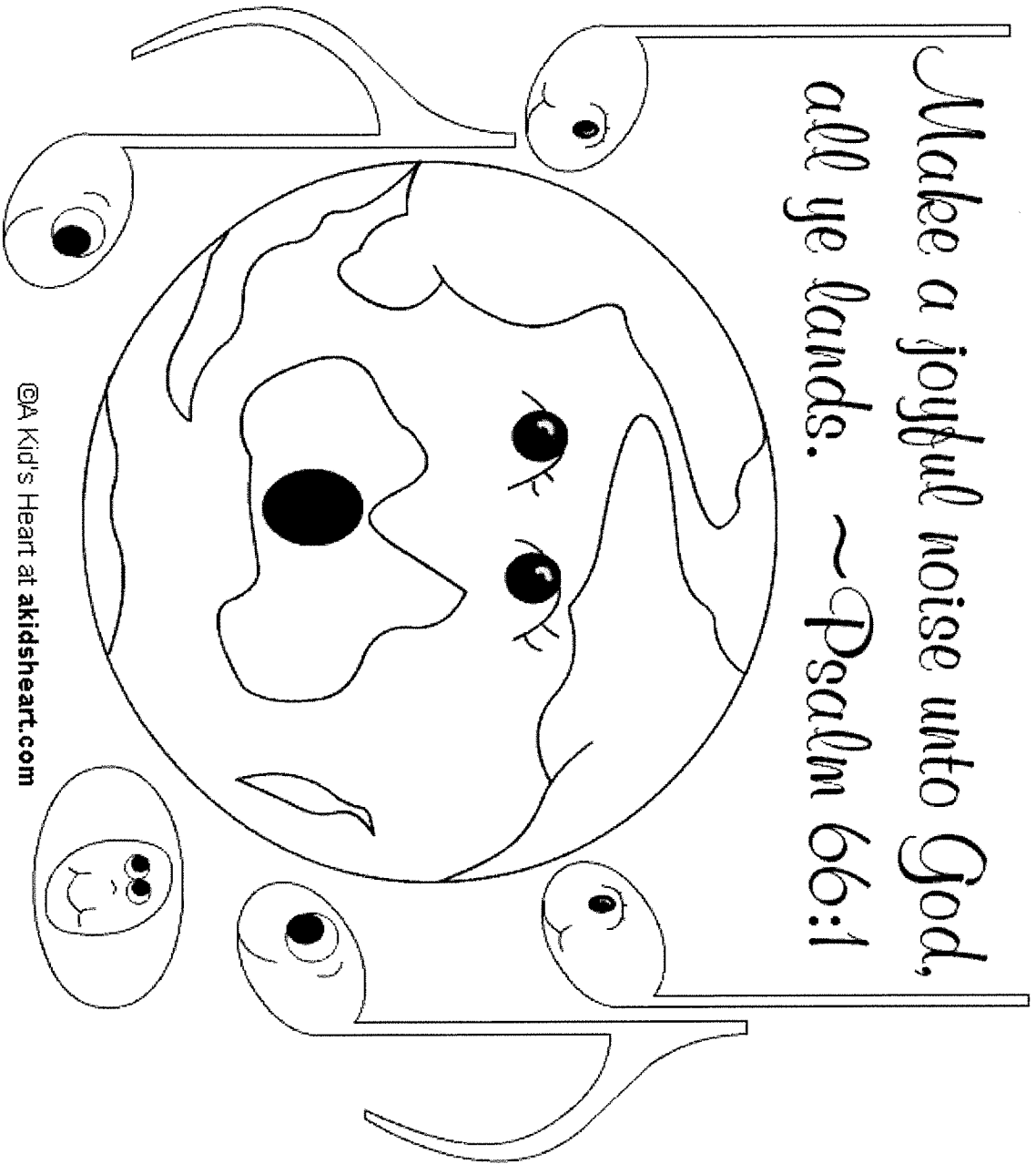
Next, Our Let's Talk group that formed late last year has a meeting this week (that's the group for St. Mark, Christ the Good Shepherd, and Holy Cross to talk about collaborative things). We are continuing that conversation.

Next, Our Stewardship team is working on some ideas to share with you soon. Holy Cross Council continues to meet and make plans for our future. Please pray for all of these good folks.

**Here's my big idea I'm cooking up for Pentecost – May 31!** We have 3 confirmands. For the next 3 weeks I am going to send you flames to color, and ask you to color the front (nothing fancy if you don't want to) and write a note on the back to **EACH of the 3 Confirmands – Chloe Addison Elmore, Clay Barrett Nyquest, Cole Allen Elmore** – then get your artwork to the church (drop by during office hours Tues – Thurs 9 – 1 or mail to us) *Then on May 31 during drive up communion, we will honor those three kids – with honking, with waving, with balloons, or whatever! **Don't tell the kids! It's a surprise!***

**-Blessings always, Pastor Patricia+**

*Make a joyful noise unto God,  
all ye lands. ~ Psalm 66:1*



**WORSHIPPING AT HOME WITH HOLY CROSS - SIXTH SUNDAY IN  
EASTER - MAY 17, 2020.**

**THANKSGIVING FOR BAPTISM**

Alleluia! Christ is risen.

**Christ is risen indeed. Alleluia!**

Joined to Christ in the waters of baptism,  
we are raised with him to new life.

Let us give thanks for the gift of baptism.

We give you thanks, O God,  
for in the beginning you created us in your image  
and planted us in a well-watered garden.

In the desert you promised pools of water for the parched,  
and you gave us water from the rock.

When we did not know the way,  
you sent the Good Shepherd to lead us to still waters.

At the cross, you watered us from Jesus' wounded side,  
and on this day, you shower us again with the water of life.

We praise you for your salvation through water,  
for the water in this font,  
and for all water everywhere.

Bathe us in your forgiveness, grace, and love.

Satisfy the thirsty, and give us the life only you can give.

To you be given honor and praise  
through Jesus Christ our Lord

in the unity of the Holy Spirit, now and forever. **Amen.**

**GATHERING HYMN ELW 631 *Love Divine, All Loves Excelling***

1 Love divine, all loves excelling,  
Joy of heav'n, to earth come down!  
Fix in us thy humble dwelling,  
all thy faithful mercies crown.  
Jesus, thou art all compassion,  
pure, unbounded love thou art;  
visit us with thy salvation,  
enter ev'ry trembling heart.

2 Breathe, oh breathe thy loving Spirit  
Into ev'ry troubled breast;  
let us all in thee inherit;  
Let us find thy promised rest.  
Take away the love of sinning;  
Alpha and Omega be;  
end of faith, as its beginning,  
Set our hearts at liberty.

4 Finish then thy new creation,  
pure and spotless let us be;  
let us see thy great salvation  
perfectly restored in thee!  
Changed from glory into glory,

till in heav'n we take our place,  
till we cast our crowns before thee,  
lost in wonder, love, and praise!

**\*\*PRAYER OF THE DAY**

Let us pray.

Almighty God, your Son Jesus Christ is the way, the truth, and the life.  
Give us grace to love one another, to follow in the way of his  
commandments, and to share his risen life with all the world, for he lives  
and reigns with you and the Holy Spirit, one God, now and forever.

**Amen.**

**WORD**

*Please open your Bible to the following readings;*

**\*\*FIRST READING: Acts 7:55-60**

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**\*\*PSALM: Psalm 31:1-5, 15-16**

**\*\*SECOND READING: 1 Peter 2:2-10**

The word of the Lord.

**Thanks be to God.**

**GOSPEL ACCLAMATION:**

Lord, to whom shall we go?

**You have the words of eternal life.**

**Glory and praise to you, O lord Jesus Christ?**

**\*\*GOSPEL: John 14:1-14 (A recorded version can be found on  
[www.holycrosslutheran-salem.org](http://www.holycrosslutheran-salem.org))**

The gospel of the Lord.

**Praise to you, O Christ.**

**NICENE CREED**

With the whole church, let us confess our faith.

**We believe in one God,**

**the Father, the Almighty,**

**maker of heaven and earth,**

**of all that is, seen and unseen.**

**We believe in one Lord, Jesus Christ,**

**the only Son of God,**

**eternally begotten of the Father,**

**God from God, Light from Light,  
true God from true God,  
begotten, not made,  
of one Being with the Father;  
through him all things were made.**

**For us and for our salvation**

**he came down from heaven,  
was incarnate of the Holy Spirit and the virgin Mary  
and became truly human.**

**For our sake he was crucified under Pontius Pilate;  
he suffered death and was buried.**

**On the third day he rose again  
in accordance with the scriptures;**

**he ascended into heaven**

**and is seated at the right hand of the Father.**

**He will come again in glory to judge the living and the dead,  
and his kingdom will have no end.**

**We believe in the Holy Spirit, the Lord, the giver of life,**

**who proceeds from the Father and the Son,\***

**who with the Father and the Son is worshiped and glorified,  
who has spoken through the prophets.**

**We believe in one holy catholic and apostolic church.**

**We acknowledge one baptism for the forgiveness of sins.**

**We look for the resurrection of the dead,**

**and the life of the world to come. Amen.**

### **PRAYERS OF THE PEOPLE**

*Please see attached prayers.*

### **OFFERING PRAYER**

Let us pray.

God our provider, you have not fed us with bread alone, but with words of grace and life. Bless us and these your gifts, which we receive from your bounty, through Jesus Christ our Lord. **Amen.**

### **THE GREAT THANKSGIVING**

When our congregation gathered for the celebration of Holy Communion, we heard again the story of God's mighty acts and of the love shown us in the death and resurrection of our Lord Jesus Christ.

With thanksgiving we remembered that “in the night in which he was betrayed, our Lord Jesus took bread, and gave thanks; broke it, and gave it to his disciples, saying: Take and eat; this my body, given for you. Do this for the remembrance of me. Again, after supper, he took the cup gave thanks, and gave it for all to drink, saying: This cup is the new covenant in my blood, shed for you and all people for the forgiveness of sin. Do this for the remembrance of me.”

The people of our congregation were given assurance of our Lord’s presence through the gift of his Holy Spirit. As you worship in your homes, we remember the gift of communion that we share.

Jesus said, “I am the bread of life, whoever comes to me shall never hunger, and whoever believes in me shall never thirst.”

***At this time, you may remember the gift of holy communion with your own bread and cup.***

**Communion Blessing** The body and blood of our Lord Jesus Christ strengthen you and keep you in His grace. **Amen**

**LORD’S PRAYER** Lord, remember us in your kingdom and teach us to pray.

**Our Father, who art in heaven,  
hallowed be thy name,  
thy kingdom come, thy will be done,  
on earth as it is in heaven.**

**Give us this day our daily bread;  
and forgive us our trespasses,  
as we forgive those  
who trespass against us;  
and lead us not into temptation,  
but deliver us from evil.**

**For thine is the kingdom,  
and the power, and the glory,  
forever and ever. Amen.**

**BLESSING**

The Lord bless you and keep you.

The Lord’s face shine on you with grace and mercy.

The Lord look upon you with favor and † give you peace. **Amen.**

**Praying together at Holy Cross – May 17, 2020**

**We pray for those in leadership in our country, our state and our cities. May God sustain them and continue to point them to compassionate, quick and well-informed response.**



**Lord, in your mercy**      Hear Our Prayer

**We pray for those who struggle with chronic illness, and those who are affected by the Coronavirus. For family members and friends of those who are ill. *(specific people are mentioned here)***

**Lord, in your mercy**      Hear Our Prayer

**We pray for meaningful work and tasks to keep us focused on the positive. We pray for those struggling with low employment and no employment. *(specific people are mentioned here)***

**Lord, in your mercy**      Hear Our Prayer

**We pray for all affected by our new ways of learning –students, teachers, parents and family. May we find joy in the new normal, and solace for what is lost in your love. *(specific people are mentioned here)***

**Lord, in your mercy**      Hear Our Prayer

**We pray for the good use of our time, including time for meaningful outreach and recreation. *(specific people are mentioned here)***

**Lord, in your mercy**      Hear Our Prayer

**We pray for the rain and sun, and all that we need to grow and tend the food needed for the survival of all people. Bless the farmer. *(specific people are mentioned here)***

**Lord, in your mercy**      Hear Our Prayer

**For this and all those matters, circumstances and individuals whose needs are brought to mind at this time. *(specific people are mentioned here)***

**Lord, in your mercy**      Hear Our Prayer

**We pray for all who focus on you in this time Lord, Give us your peace. Thank you, Lord, for loving us. It is what makes all the difference. Amen.**

Sermon for May 10, 2020 This week was the one year anniversary of the death of Rachel Held Evans. Maybe you never heard of Rachel, but she was a writer. A Christian writer. She died May 4 2019 from a serious reaction to an infection, and to the medicine used to fight that infection. She was 37. It was a tragedy. To her family, 2 little children, and a spouse, to her friends, and to her readers. Rachel was a writer that I read a bit of before her death, but began to read more in this year since she died so tragically. And her story speaks to me. Rachel was a southern girl, raised in an evangelical home where the pastors are men and the questions asked of scripture and of God are strictly confined to the appropriate questions. But, Rachel was smart as a whip, and when she began to have those questions that nearly all Christians come to in their lives – why does God approve of all those massacres in the old testament? Why does the Bible come down so hard on people who are different – depending on where you read – women who cut their long hair, men who grow their short hair, and people in unnatural sexual relationships? And with her questions she began to dig, and came to conversations with theologians and housewives that changed her perspective. God is a God of love, Rachel writes. “...faith isn't about having everything figured out ahead of time; faith is about following the quiet voice of God without having everything figured out ahead of time.”

Conversations matter. Between Christians, as Rachel Held Evans tells us, and with Jesus, as we find him in John's gospel, has a long history of conversations with many people. He talks with Nicodemus about being born again, with the woman at the well about what mountain God is worshipped upon. But with his disciples, and in particular in the evening just before he was arrested and the day before he was crucified, Jesus has conversations with those disciples about faith, about heaven, about the meaning of life. And then he talks about many dwelling places. I've read this gospel passage from John 14 at many memorial and graveside services. It's a comforting passage. “I go to prepare a place for you” Jesus says, and then later, in v 3, “And if I go and prepare a place for you, I will come again and will take you to myself, so that where I am, there you may be also” You got that right, Jesus says he's coming back to get you – you're not journeying to the place for you alone. But, as comforting as Jesus' words about preparing a place for us, and that we won't be alone are, there is something more going on here in the conversation. Jesus is sharing power. With the disciples. With us. Really. The passage I want to look at is rarely preached, at least I haven't heard it much, because, well, you'll see.

Here's what he says, “Very truly, I tell you, the one who believes in me will also do the works that I do and, in fact, will do greater works than these, because I am going to the Father. I will do whatever you ask in my name, so that the Father may be glorified in the Son. If in my name you ask me for anything, I will do it.”

It looks pretty clear to me that Jesus is empowering the disciples, and by extension us – you and me. But I do not read these words as extending some magic to us, no I think Rachel Held Evans understood this passage better than I –

“We could not become like God, so God became like us. God showed us how to heal instead of kill, how to mend instead of destroy, how to love instead of hate, how to live instead of long for more. When we nailed God to a tree, God forgave. And when we buried God in the ground, God got up.”

I see Jesus empowering the disciples. By conversation. By reminding them of his time with them. God became one of us and modeled for us a life of love – and included in that is the realization that we have power as the people of God. This love we know so well from Jesus' table is the only power we need to change the world. The phrase that Rachel uses that touches me in this time of pandemic is this – **How to live instead of long for more**. I am praying God is showing you that in these days where the rhythm of life has been disrupted and you have the option of drawing near to the love of God in the every day. Be like Rachel, my friends. Let us draw near to God, and be like God. Together. Amen. Blessings – Pastor Patricia+



